



Pre-Dentistry

Dentistry programs are designed to train students to diagnose, to help prevent, and to treat disorders of the teeth, gums, and jaws. Dentistry requires diagnostic abilities and manual skills, and individuals pursuing this profession should have good visual memory, judgment of space and shape, a high degree of manual dexterity for precise work. Good business sense, self-discipline, and communication skills are helpful for success in private practice. Graduates possess the preventive, diagnostic, and technical knowledge and skills necessary to provide patients with comprehensive dental services in a variety of health care delivery systems.

Taking the Right Classes

Preparing to apply to dental school is somewhat similar to preparing for medical school. In preparation for dental school, a baccalaureate degree is recommended but not mandatory. Upon completion of 90 hours of coursework, the student may apply for admission to dental school provided that all of the prerequisite course work is complete and the Dental Admission Test (DAT) has been taken. While this is acceptable, *most dental schools admit students who will have earned their baccalaureate degree.* *Note: A maximum of 60-70 semester units from the community college are accepted. The remaining units must be taken at the upper-division level at a four-year college/university.

There are several courses required by most dental schools, which usually include:

Pre-Dental Course Requirements for Most Dental Schools

1 year of English	ENGL G100 + 110
1 year of chemistry (with laboratory)	CHEM G180 + G185
1 year of organic chemistry (with laboratory)	CHEM G220 + G225
1 year of biology (with laboratory)	BIOL G180 + G182
1 year of physics (with laboratory)	PHYS G120 + G125 or PHYS G185 + G280
1 semester of Psychology	PSYC G100 (or G100H)
1 semester of statistics	MATH G160
1 semester of sculpture	ART G142
1 quarter/semester of genetics	Upper Division Course: Taken at University
1 quarter/semester of Human Anatomy	BIOL G220 Highly Recommended
1 quarter/semester of Human Physiology	BIOL G225 Highly Recommended
1 quarter/semester of microbiology	BIOL G210 Highly Recommended
1 quarter/semester of biochemistry	Upper Division Course: Taken at University
1 quarter/semester of histology	Highly Recommended
Computer Skills	Highly Recommended
Communication	COMM G100 or COMM G110
Economics	ECON G170 or G175
<i>Note that some schools disallow AP/IB/CLEP credit for prerequisite coursework.</i>	
<i>*Some colleges require calculus level mathematics in addition to statistics.</i>	

Choosing the Best Major

What is the best major for pre-dental students? The answer is: *there is no best major.* Choose a major that you find most interesting, challenging and satisfying. You should study subjects that you really enjoy, and avoid choosing a major because it might "look good" on your application. No points are given for the major that you choose, however, you will probably perform better in a major that captures your interests.

Many students choose to major in the biological sciences because the requirements for a biology degree are very similar to dental school admission requirements. If you decide to pursue a non-science major, then your strong performance in the pre-dental requirements will be crucial.

Important for Community College Students:

If you complete all of your pre-dental requirements at community college, it will be in your best interest to take several upper-division science classes at the four-year institution to which you transfer. Performing well in upper-division science courses further demonstrates your ability to handle the rigorous science-based coursework found in dental school. If you are not a science major, it may still be important for you to take additional science courses beyond the minimum requirements to further support application to dental school. ¹*Also note that some dental colleges will disallow community college coursework for fulfilling prerequisites after a bachelor's degree has been earned.*

DAT Preparation

The Dental Admission Test (DAT) conducted by the American Dental Association (ADA) is required by U.S. dental schools. The testing program is designed to measure general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. For information about the DAT, see <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>. The DAT tests the student across four subject areas: a survey of natural sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning. Each section is scored from 1 to 30 points and an average composite score is approximately 17. The DAT can be scheduled virtually at anytime by contacting the local Prometric Test Centers near your community. Although the DAT may be taken multiple times, there is a mandatory 90-day waiting period that must elapse between exams.

Dental School Application Process

1. Meet minimum Requirements: 90 semester units or a Bachelor's degree for most all applicants, prerequisite coursework, DAT scores (within 3 years of application).
2. Apply to universities (DAT scores included). Those deemed competitive are asked to complete a supplemental application with additional information and documentation. Includes answering essay questions, providing letters of recommendation, resume, etc.
3. Be invited to interview with selected university committees
4. Get a letter of "Acceptance", "Denial", or "Waitlist"
5. Matriculate to the university of choice where final acceptance was granted.

Dental Schools:

There are 62 Dental schools in the U.S., and 10 in Canada (<http://www.ada.org/267.aspx>)

There are six Dental Schools in California

UC Los Angeles: https://www.dentistry.ucla.edu/	Avg GPA: 3.74 / 3.70 Sci / DAT 23
UC San Francisco: http://dentistry.ucsf.edu/	Avg GPA: 3.57 / 3.50 Sci / DAT 22
Loma Linda University: http://www.llu.edu/dentistry/index.page	Avg GPA: 3.30 or higher recommended / DAT 19+
USC: http://dentistry.usc.edu/	Avg GPA: 3.40 / 3.50 Sci / DAT 20
Western University of Health Sciences: http://www.westernu.edu/dentistry-about	Avg GPA: 3.32 / 3.24 Sci
University of the Pacific: http://www.dental.uop.edu/Academic_Programs/Doctor_of_Dental_Surgery.html	Avg GPA: 3.38 / 3.47 Sci

Degrees Offered: Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS). Some will award the Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)

Dental school typically is 4 academic years. Studies include classroom instruction and laboratory work in basic sciences including anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology, and clinical sciences, including laboratory techniques. During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists.

Dual Degrees: Some campuses will offer joint degrees along with the DDS, including a research Ph.D.; Masters in Business Administration (MBA); and other Master's level degrees.

Minimum GPA required for applying is 2.70 – 3.00

Average GPA for admission to California Dental Schools: 3.4 cumulative / 3.5 sciences

Residency Status: US citizen or permanent resident (permanent residents must be in possession of their resident alien card at time of application)

Median Income: \$146, 920

Additional Resources:

American Dental Association: http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/Pages/default.aspx